From science to a career that clicks

Darryl Stringer

Course graduated from: BSc majoring in anatomy and genetics
Year of Graduation: 1998
Job: Senior photographer and co-owner of architectural, real estate and commercial photography firm Highshots Photography.
Career: Started in his parent’s small photography business. Now runs the expanded firm with his mother and his wife.
Reflection: “For me, science is about learning the ‘whys’ and the ‘hows’. It’s learning about how things work and how that can then help people.”

Darryl Stringer was doing third year genetics in 1997 – a particularly exciting time because the Human Genome Project, which would eventually map all the 20,500-odd human genes, was already well underway. “We could see that this was an area that was really going to take off,” he recalls.

Also doing an anatomy major, Stringer was especially enjoying projects involving studies of human tissue conducted in order to detect disease or causes of injury, and was hoping to gain a job in a forensics or pathology lab.

A serendipitous career path

But he then spent six months making unsuccessful job applications, including missing out on the job of his dreams at the then Victorian Institute of Forensic Pathology (now the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine).

Around that time Stringer’s family were thinking about a move to Queensland. Stringer and his sister were happy to move too, and the newly minted science graduate continued his search for scientific jobs in Brisbane, again with no success.

When his parents decided to buy a small photography business, he picked up a camera and decided to try photographic work.

Business and reputation grow

His father soon returned to his real estate career but Stringer and his mother began building the fledgling business into the leading specialist architectural, real estate and commercial photography firm it is today.

Fifteen years on, the 37-year-old has no regrets, although he is delighted that his seven-year-old son Kaden, with whom he watches the science-entertainment show Mythbusters, says he wants to be a scientist.

He also believes that his science studies gave him the tools to master other skills with relative ease – especially the full-time specialist Brisbane College of Photography and Art course he did in 2003.

“I spent all those hours researching and finding reports in the science field and I’ve been able to translate that into the ability to find solutions and strategies in both business and photography applications,” he says.

Scientific background kicks in

A Business and Economics faculty “human resources” subject done as part of his science degree was also useful in business-building.

Once digital photography replaced film and Stringer began his own in-house production and photo-shopping, his work became more technical and his research abilities were even more important.

“You are always encountering different technical problems and roadblocks – so you look at books and material online to find the solution. You test and measure and move on.”

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